

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OFDEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
THE CENTER FOR MILITARY HISTORY
WASHINGTON, DC 20005-3402

DAMH-RA

13 April 1994

MEMORANDUM FOR DOD WWII Commemoration Committee (CDR L. Smith)

SUBJECT: Review of Smithsonian Exhibit "The Crossroads"

1. Per your 10 March 1994 note to LTC Williams, I have reviewed the text of the Smithsonian exhibit "The Crossroads." My remarks are keyed to page, paragraph, and line number of the January 12, 1994 version of the script.

page 5, graf 3, lines 9-11 -- "defend their unique culture against Western imperialism"

How does this square with Japanese conduct in China or the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere? Japan waged a war of aggression in China, SE & SW Asia. Perhaps it was a war against western imperialism in the sense that they wanted to replace it with Japanese imperialism.

page 11, graf 2, line 4 - "American artillery and bombs transformed the island"

Didn't Japanese shoot back with their artillery? We are talking about the southern part of the island. If we are talking about corpses, impressment of Okinawan civilians by Japanese army still rankles the indigenous population. The feeling of the Okinawans toward mainland Japanese need attention.

page 13, graf 1 - Suggest balancing American view with a Japanese soldier's view of Americans. For example, Ted and Haruko Taya Cooks' book, Japan at War: An Oral History, p. 110-111, gives one Japanese soldier's motives for executing captured US pilots.

graf 2, line 4 - The Japanese garrison on Okinawa never expected to be evacuated. They were to die in place. Indeed there are Japanese historians who maintain the sole function of the garrison was to demonstrate to the Allies the suffering that awaited them should they invade the Japanese home islands.

line 8 - If the Americans were reluctant to take Japanese prisoners, the Japanese were notorious for their treatment of prisoners. For instance, The Japanese Army was under orders on New Guinea to execute captured Allied pilots. Use the famous photograph of a Japanese officer in the act of beheading an Australian pilot to balance the presentation. Unless you have exact figures, you cannot say "often shot those attempting to

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give up." Change to "sometimes." The Japanese Army Field Service Regulation of 1941 made being taken alive a court martial offense. This regulation coerced many Japanese into fighting beyond hope.

line 13 - Japanese army was in many cases responsible for destruction on Okinawan homes and creation of refugees.

page 15, graf 1, lines 9-15 - Because of the point system, veterans would go home. Units stayed, but with green troops for the invasion.

Is there a Japanese view to balance the American's?

page 21, - refer to Ted & Haruko Cook's book

page 22, graf 1, line 4 "bases in Japan." Okinawa was a prefecture of Japan.

page 28, graf 1, line 8 - Naimushoshi gives a figure of 297,000 civilians killed in bombing raids and another 366,000 missing or injured for 668,000 total. A further refinement of civilian casualties is 310,028 killed (including 109,328 in atomic attacks); 351,602 injured (including 78,488 in atomic attacks); and 24,010 missing.

page 30, graf 1, line 4 - telescopes history. Allied air forces did not "quickly succumb" to strike civilian targets. See Weinberg book. German air attack on Rotterdam was turning point.

page 30, graf 1, line 12-14 - cause and effect not shown in lines 12-13. Whom did the attacks provoke to retaliate in massive fashion?

graf 2, line 7 - Hamburg was attacked with fire in 1943.

page 36, graf 1, lines 11-12 - get actual figures.

page 38, graf 1, lines 2-3 - Japan & reality of total war - Japan fighting in China since 1937. Already on rationing of food, fuel, clothing, and wartime conscription in effect. 450,000 casualties in China before Dec 7, 1941.

graf 2, line 5; suggest "combined with racial stereotypes on both sides"

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page 40, graf 1, line 3 - US was the arsenal of democracy throughout WW II. It was one of the basic strategic decisions of the war, not something achieved in 1945.

page 42, graf 3, line 8; Were Hispanics incarcerated en masse in relocation camps? If not, the "similar problems" is misleading.

Suggest contrasting the Japanese slogans of liberating Asia with their grim occupation polices in Philippines, Indochina, Malaya, and elsewhere. Recall that about one million Vietnamese perished from starvation under Japanese occupation.

page 44, graf 1, line 4 "European enemies as good people" (but the Nazi Party was rather large).

To attribute all to racism is monocausal. There were other factors, e.g., Rape of Nanking, Panay Incident, Japanese aggression in China, sneak attack on Pearl Harbor, Bataan Death March (known by mid-1944), sack of Manila in 1945, warfare itself, and so forth.

page 51, graf 2, Japanese civilians were ill-prepared for incendiary raids because the Japanese government did little for civilian defense except evacuate children and rip down homes for fire breaks. See Gordon Daniels, "The Great Tokyo Air Raid," in W.G. Beasley, ed., Modern Japan: Aspects of History, Literature, and Society (Tokyo: Tuttle, 1976) for an objective assessment of Japanese deficiencies.

The neighborhood associations were an auxiliary means to assist police and firemen of Home Ministry.

SECOND SCRIPT -

page 1, graf 3, line 10; who told Truman and when that the bomb would impress the USSR?

line 12- Were the alternatives, even in hindsight, realistic? Or would they have resulted in more, not less, human suffering and misery. See Ray Skates, The Invasion of Japan: Alternative to the Bomb (Columbia, SC: U. of South Carolina Press, 1994).

page 8, graf 1, line 4; suggest "top or super-secret project" "Ultra" has a different meaning in WW II.

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page 13, graf 1, lines 5-6; Isn't it racist? Why must Oriental languages be "exotic?" How about "difficult"?

page 15, graf 1, line 4. dropping the bomb on "white people." Many of the emigree scientists who developed the atomic bomb had been forced to flee their native lands by the Nazis. It seems likely they would have endorsed the bomb's use on Hitler.

graf 1, line 9-10 - Japanese less capable of analyzing a bomb -being less advanced scientifically does not equate to racism.

page 19, graf 2, line 4; The Japanese government, including the emperor, was not willing to surrender unconditionally even as late as mid-June 1945. The emperor kept looking for the means to score one military victory as the basis for a negotiated peace. After July military insisted it could punish American invaders on Kyushu sufficiently to gain negotiated peace. See Showa tenno no dokuhakuroku (Tokyo: Bungei shunju, 1991). They knew they were not winning the war, but did not accept that they were defeated so badly as to surrender unconditionally.

line 6 - Who among Truman's advisors and when told him bomb would be leverage against USSR?

line 14 - The USSR was a central player in any invasion of Japan. The strategy was for the Soviets to pin down Japanese forces on the Asian mainland (about 2,000,000 troops) while MacArthur invaded Kyushu. MacArthur in July 1945 was demanding USSR enter war against Japan. Yalta and Potsdam conferences stipulated the Soviets would go to war against Japan. Stalin met the Yalta timetable.

page 23, graf 2, line 10; an excerpt from Truman's diary to illustrate the contention would be most helpful.

page 25, graf 2, line 11; recent Japanese scholarship shows more than army leaders favored a negotiated peace.

page 27, graf 2, line 3; Hirohito's role is undergoing revision in Japan based on the publication in 1989 of his reminiscences of war years. In the spring of 1945, he knew the war was going badly for Japan but believed the Allies had also suffered heavy losses. He hoped for a military victory as a basis for a negotiated peace.

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page 28, graf 2, line 2 et seq. From MAGIC (Japanese diplomatic traffic) US knew about peace feelers. However from ULTRA (Japanese military traffic) US knew of massive build-up of Kyushu on very beaches slated for assault. See Edward Drea, MacArthur's ULTRA: Codebreaking and the war against Japan, 1942-1945 (Lawrence, KS: U. of Kansas Press, 1992).

page 28, graf 2, line 10; These "signals", even in hindsight, were overtures for a negotiated peace. Unconditional surrender was the coin of the realm.

page 31, graf 1. If I had wings, I could fly reasoning. This is speculation, not history.

page 31, graf 2, line 8; given internal Japanese situation, this contention seems doubtful.

page 32, graf 1, line 4; This is not shown.

page 34, graf 2, line 8; US policy that USSR was needed in war against Japan never changed officially.

page 37, graf 2, line 5 et seq. The context of Byrnes remarks is necessary.

page 39, graf 2, line 9. "virtually all" is an overstatement.

Besides Alperovitz (which is shaky, if popular, history), show Bernstein, Butow, Maddox, Skates, Sherry and other reputable scholars who have differing critical interpretations of the atomic bomb. You might consider displaying the work of Japanese historians and their differing interpretations of the bomb).

page 46, graf 1, line 8; This contradicts page 15, graf 1, line 4.

page 48, graf 1; forthcoming Maddox book makes even a stronger case that retrospective judgements of high ranking military leaders were not their opinions in 1945.

page 54, graf 1. See MacArthur's estimates for first phase of invasion and later Marshall recommending invasion be switched to Sendai area.

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page 56 HISTORICAL CONTROVERSIES ignores the Japanese role. They were, after all, the ones who could have ended war by surrendering unconditionally. The interpretation places the burden of proof on the United States for either not knowing the extent of Japan's deterioration or for ignoring it to drop the atomic bombs. It is a retrospective judgement. What of Japan's assessment of Allied aims? Did it keep the war going beyond what today's hindsight regards as rational limits?

page 62, graf 1, line 10- Does this mean military advisors? Marshall was not among them.

graf 2, line 5 - Hirohito wanted a negotiated peace settlement.

graf 2, line 11- in the context of summer 1945, ULTRA intelligence, and Japanese bombast, the diplomatic effort was nothing new.

page 67, graf 1, line 3- I have trouble with the morality of killing by means other than atomic weapons is somehow acceptable.

THIRD SCRIPT

page 21, graf 1, line 5- suggest "limited" in place of "practically no". Tsukeegee airmen are one case in point.

page 25, graf 2, line 12- is this all B-29 losses or only operational losses.

FOURTH SCRIPT

page 2, graf 4- Army Marine Transport Center should be rendered Army Water Transport Headquarters. Also page 38, graf 1, page 39, graf 1.

page 46, graf 2, line 5- "probably" for "undoubtedly"

page 46, graf 2, line 10- see Naimushoshi

SCRIPT FIVE

page 2, graf 1, line 10- Japanese elite and the emperor
line 13, in northeast China.

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page 3, graf 2, line 4- Hiroshima was back on the airwaves by 1200 on 6 August. The Army radio stations there resumed their normal schedule of broadcasts on 7 August (Special Intelligence Bulletin, 7/8 August 1945). Kure Naval Base, across the bay, provided Tokyo at 062258 with a detailed description of events in Hiroshima and reported a "new type of

bomb." On August 7, 12th Army Air Division reported to the chief of staff, Air General Army, Tokyo, on effects of atomic bombing of Hiroshima. Also see Statements of Japanese Officials, General Arisue was dispatched from Tokyo to Hiroshima on 7 August.

graf 3, line 3-4- Manchurian offensive was planned well before August. It may have opened a week earlier than planned, but it was carefully and thoroughly planned and was far along when the atomic bomb fell on Hiroshima.

page 8, graf 1, line 3- Did we have any more atomic bombs available?

Why not use Paul Fussell's quotations on the atomic bomb?

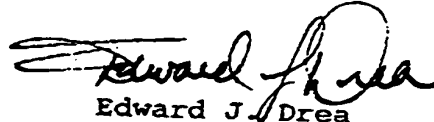
2. Is the point of showing the A-bombed Japanese to elicit sympathy for victims? If so, perhaps photos of victims of Japanese aggression and atrocities, especially Chinese, Filipinos, and Vietnamese would be useful counterweights to show why the war came to an atomic conclusion.
3. There were also heavy casualties (30% killed and 30% wounded) among Second General Army military personnel. Fifty-ninth Army Headquarters was reduced to ashes with corresponding loss of life. Did these soldiers leave artifacts for display? What happened to Japanese men in Hiroshima? Military casualties are available in Boeicho, boeisenshishtsu, ed., Hondo boku sakusen. Also see Oosako Ichiro, Hiroshima: Showa nijunen, (Tokyo: Chuko shinso, 1975) for the eye witness account of a newspaper editor of events in Hiroshima from January through September 1945.
4. If the point in atomic bombs are morally reprehensible and we as a nation are morally reprehensible for using them, say so.
5. If the point is "never again" it encompasses more than the two bombs. It addresses the context of WW II in Asia, particularly the Japanese conduct of their war. The Japanese

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as perpetrators, however, is absent from most of the exhibit. This leaves it unbalanced. Even the Japanese emperor said publicly that the atomic bomb was probably unavoidable.

6. The story line is an overview of 50 years of American historiography about the bomb. The glaring deficiency is the absence of 50 years of Japanese historiography on the same subject. For balance, both are necessary.



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